

MARKED-UP VERSION OF THE AMENDED CLAIMS

(Version with markings to show changes made)

10. (new) The method according to claim 1, further comprising
 - monitoring a credit balance state with a first operational block exhibiting a game stake;
 - monitoring the total playing time by a second operational block;
 - randomly determining winning symbols during the complete game time by a control unit;
 - illustrating and displaying the randomly determined winning symbols with a symbol display device;
 - activating a first branching block by a third operational block for determining the remaining residual game time;
 - determining in a second branching block in case of a presence of remaining residual game time, if an operating element furnished on the front side of the entertainment automat has been actuated;
 - performing a return to the first branching block in case of an absence of an operating element activation.

11. (new) The method according to claim 1, further comprising

determining which operational element was actuated in case of an activation of an operational element;

presenting card symbols with the symbol display device;

drawing not held cards by new cards determined randomly from the card storage in a fourth operational block;

determining a winning value of a displayed symbol combination;

displaying the winning value in a fifth operational block;

checking in a third branching block, if the maximum winning value is displayed with the symbol display device;

holding the winning symbols displayed with the symbol display device upon remaining of a residual game time can be held in the following by activation of an operational element;

performing a return from the third branching block to the first branching block upon checking if the game time has ended;

determining an actualized winning value in case of an ended game time in a sixth operational block;

performing a return from the sixth operational block to a first operational block by checking, if a further credit balance state for basing a further game stake is present.

12. (new) The method according to claim 1, further comprising determining symbol combinations randomly in case of a credit balance state exhibiting a game stake in the credit balance counter of the entertainment automat;

performing a switch over from a base game into a supplemental game by a control unit in case a predetermined winning value is coordinated to the symbol combination displayed by the symbol display device or if a particular symbol combination is displayed with the symbol display device; determining in a branching block if a preset jackpot winning value has been reached or surpassed for a predetermined symbol combination.

13. (new) The method according to claim 1, further comprising monitoring a total game time by an operational block; randomly determining winning symbols by a control unit during a total game time; displaying the randomly determined winning symbols with the symbol display device;

activating a branching block by an operational block for determining the remaining residual game time;

checking in the branching block in case of a presence of remaining residual game time, if an operational element present on the front side of the entertainment automat has been actuated;

performing a return to a branching block in case of no actuation of the operational element;

checking which one operational element was actuated in case of an actuation of the operational element;

checking in the branching block 45, if a maximum winning value is displayed with the symbol display device;

performing a return upon non-reaching of the maximum winning value from one branching block to a second branching block, wherein the game time is checked in the second branching block;

displaying winning symbols with the symbol display device upon remaining of a residual game time;

holding the display of the winning symbols by actuating of the operational element or throwing out all up to now held cards by actuating an entry block.

performing a return from the one branching block to the second branching block by checking if the game time has ended; determining an actualized winning value in an operational block in case of an ended game time, and displaying actualized winning value with a coordinated display means; performing a return from a second operational block to a third operational block by checking if a further credit balance state sufficient for a game stake is present.

14. (new) The method according to claim 2, further comprising initiating a network by actuating the power switch of each entertainment automat; assuming of the master function by one of the entertainment automats, wherein the master function comprises essentially that a coordination of the entertainment automats present in the network is performed with respect to the collection of data through the counter state of the jackpot amount and the release of a common special game, which takes place at all entertainment automats present in the network at the same time; switching the second entertainment automat present in the network to a slave function;

randomly determining a symbol combination in an operational block and displaying the symbol combination in the symbol display device in case of a sufficient credit balance state;

transferring an adjustable shared part amount of the game stake of each base game to a common jackpot counter;

checking the counter state of the jackpot counter in a branching block following to a determination of the winning value in the base game;

sending from the master a control signal to all other entertainment automats present in the network if the predetermined jackpot counter state is reached or surpassed, wherein the slaves switch to the supplemental game based on the control signal after termination of the base game;

monitoring in an operational block, if an okay signal was returned by all slaves;

starting the supplemental game at the same time in all participating coin actuated entertainment automats.

15. (new) The method according to claim 2, further comprising activating an entertainment automat in case of a credit balance state exhibiting a game stake;

monitoring a total game time by an operational block; randomly determining winning symbols by a control unit and displaying the winning symbols with the symbol display device within the total game time; activating a branching block for determining the remaining residual game time by the operational block; checking in a branching block if an operational element disposed on the front side of the entertainment automat was actuated in case of a presence of remaining residual game time; performing a return to the branching block if no operational element actuation took place; checking in case of actuation of the operational element which operational element was actuated; determining and displaying a game result of the displayed symbol combination in an operational block; determining in a first branching block if a maximum winning value is displayed with the symbol display device; performing a return from the first branching block to a second branching block 39 case of a non-reaching of the maximum winning value; and checking the game time in the second branching block.

16. (new) The method according to claim 2, further comprising performing a return upon reaching of the maximum winning value from a branching block to an operational block, wherein new winning symbols are randomly determined in the operational block and are displayed with the symbol display device;

displaying winning symbols in case of a remaining residual game time with the symbol display device and holding the winning symbols in the following by actuating the operational element or throwing out all up to now held cards by actuating an entry block;

performing a return from the first branching block to the second branching block;

checking in the second branching block, if the game time has ended.

scanning the individual results of the slave entertainment automats are scanned by the entertainment automat turned master in case of an ended game time;

accumulated the incoming game results by the master;

communicating the incoming game results from the master to the slaves;

determining the winning value in the following in an operational block;

displaying the determined winning value with the coordinated display means of a respective entertainment automat;
performing a return from an operational block displaying the winning value to a second operational block checking the game stake.

17. (new) The method according to claim 2, further comprising
initiating a network by actuating the power switch of each of the entertainment automats, wherein one of the entertainment automats assumes a master function;
switching further entertainment automats contained in the network to slave operation; wherein the slave function comprises essentially that predetermined data are transmitted continuously to the master after request;
randomly determining a symbol combination in an operational block in case of a sufficient credit balance state;
displaying the determined symbol combination with the symbol display device;
transmitting an adjustable share part of the stake of each base game to a common jackpot counter;

checking in a branching block, if an instruction is present from the master to start thereupon a supplemental game following to the determination of the winning value in the base game;

confirming a receipt of the instruction of the start of the supplemental game to the master;

activating the entertainment automat in case of a credit balance state exhibiting at least a game stake;

checking by an operational block, if the master signal for the special games is present;

randomly determining winning symbols by a control unit during the complete game time;

displaying the determined winning symbols with the symbol display device;

activating a first branching block for determining the remaining residual game time by an operational block;

checking in a second branching block, if an operational element furnished on the front side of the entertainment automat was actuated;

performing a return to the first branching block in case no actuation of an operational element took place and in case of a presence of a remaining residual game time.

18. (new) The method according to claim 2, further comprising

 checking which operational element was actuated in case of an actuation of an operational element;

 determining a game result of the displayed symbol combinations;

 displaying the determined game result in the operational block;

 determining in a branching block if a maximum winning value is displayed with the symbol display device;

 performing a return from a first branching block to a second branching block in case of a non-reaching of the maximum winning value;

 checking the game time in the second branching block;

 performing a return from the first branching block to a second operational block;

 performing a return upon reaching of the maximum winning value, wherein new winning symbols are randomly determined in the second operational block and wherein the new winning symbols are displayed with the symbol display device;

 displaying winning symbols with the symbol display device in case of a remaining of residual game time;

holding the winning symbols in the following by actuating the operational element or throwing out all up to now held cards by actuating the entry block; performing a return from the first branching block to the second branching block by checking if the game time has ended; performing a return from a third operational block to a fourth operational block by checking if a further credit balance state sufficient for a game stake is present.

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 9 continue to be in the case.

New claims 10 through 18 are being submitted. The new claims 10 through 17 are based on the language of he specification.

The Office action refers to Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102.

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Vancura. Vancura discloses Gaming Machines with Bonusing. In his game he teaches the playing of a bonus game in a secondary machine adjacent to a primary machine. Vancura's invention substantially teaches the limitations as claimed.

Referring to Claim 1, 3, 7 & 9

Vancura teaches:

- that the primary machine acts as a traditional slot machine (col. 18, lines 22-24).
- that the primary gaming machine can be a suitable gaming machine, such as, slot, poker, keno etc.; and the accumulating of winnings in an award meter (col. 17, lines 44-54).

Applicant respectfully traverses. Applicant is claiming certain process steps for example in claim 1. The Office Action says that the Vancura reference teaches a traditional slot machine, that this may be a gaming machine and that winnings are accumulated. However, there is not even an allegation in the Office Action that anyone of the steps of claim 1 are performed in the teaching of the Vancura reference. For example, claim 1 requires the step of “renewing the symbols within a predetermined time window until a winning carrying symbol combination is reached;”. Such step is clearly not contained in the recitations of Vancura presented in the Office Action. Similarly the Office Action does not point to where the steps of

claims 3, 7, and 9 can be found in the Vancura reference. Applicant urges that applicant's steps are not performable in a traditional slot machine as the Office Action alleges.

The Office Action continues:

Referring to Claim 2 & 8

Vancura teaches:

- a secondary machine (claim 1);
- a bonus qualifying signal, to play a bonus game on the secondary machine, when a predetermined combination of symbols is obtain (col. 18, lines 24-28);
- determining the winning values and accumulating winnings in the specific winning machine (claim 1).

Applicant respectfully traverses.

The Office Action says that Vancura teaches a secondary machine, playing a bonus game on a secondary machine and determining winning values. Nothing is said in the Office Action about simultaneous switching.

Claim 2 requires the step: “simultaneously switching the played entertainment automats (1) into a uniform game mode upon reaching of a predetermined symbol combination or upon reaching of a predetermined credit balance state of a common credit balance counter”. The Office action does not even allege that Vancura teaches such a step of simultaneous switching.

The Office Action continues:

Referring to Claim 4

Vancura teaches:

- a bonus-qualifying event determined after the primary machine is activated (col. 3, lines 18-20 and col.4, lines 55-64).

Claim 4 requires “determining if a special symbol combination or a jackpot winning value has been reached ”. The Office Action fails to allege that such step is taught in Vancura as required in claim 4, but instead refers to “bonus qualifying event”.

The Office Action continues:

Referring to Claim 5 & 6

Vancura teaches: a secondary machine (claim 1); the use a processor to facilitate all the functions of the primary (master) and secondary (slave) machines (see figure 50); a bonus/jackpot (claim 12);

- collecting the game results of the secondary machine in the primary machine (col. 16, lines 62-67);
- that the primary machine can be used as a slot, poker or keno machine (col. 5, lines 14-20).

According to the Office Action, Vancura furnishes a primary machine and a secondary machine. No allegation exists in Vancura, that each machine can function as a master or as a slave. Claim 5 of the present application requires the steps of: "determining which one of the entertainment automats assumes a master function;

determining which one of the entertainment automats assumes a slave function;". Thus according to Vancura a primary machine and a secondary machine are fixed. Thus the teaching of Vancura clearly contradicts the process step of claim 5 of making a determination which machine assumes a

master function and which machine assumes a slave function. Claim 5 appears to be clearly patentable over Vancura.

Claim 5 further requires the following steps: "determining if a jackpot filling level has reached a predetermined release amount; starting a jackpot game at the entertainment automat performing the slave function; waiting till the slave is ready; activating the game time for the entertainment automats; randomly drawing all cards; determining if a game time has ended; collecting the game results of the slave entertainment automat in the master entertainment automat;"

None of these steps is present in Vancura. The collection of game results on the primary machine of Vancura says nothing about the step of "waiting till the slave is ready" as required in claim 5.

Reconsideration of all outstanding rejections is respectfully requested.

Entry of the present amendment is respectfully requested. All claims as presently submitted are deemed to be in form for allowance and an early notice of allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Gauselmann

By:

Horst M. Kasper, his attorney
13 Forest Drive, Warren, N.J. 07059
Tel. (908)757-2839; Reg.No. 28559
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